

[54] **COMPUTER COMMUNICATION SYSTEM
HAVING SUPPLEMENTAL FORMATS**

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[21] Appl. No.: 279,846

[22] Filed: Dec. 5, 1988

[51] Int. Cl.⁵ G06F 15/16

[52] U.S. Cl. 364/200; 364/228.3;
364/229; 364/229.1

[58] Field of Search 364/200, 900

[56] **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A computer communication system including a communication medium, a plurality of nodes coupled to the communication medium, and a transfer format selection means for selecting a format for the transfer of data between nodes. The system includes at least one default node and at least two supplemented nodes. Each node has a set of data transfer formats. A default format is included in the format set of each node. Each supplemented node has at least one supplemental format. Transfer format selection means in the form of circuitry and software provides for the selection of a data transfer format which is included in the source node format set and the destination node format set and is compatible with the communication medium. The source node includes a cache of node format sets. The source node searches for the destination node format set in the source node cache and selects a format which is common to the format sets of the source node and destination node. Our invention also includes an attention signal, a network interface and the other devices, apparatus, methods and subject matter disclosed herein.

45 Claims, 10 Drawing Sheets

